RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

ON

A STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS OF ROHINTON MISTRY, AMITAV GHOSH AND KIRAN DESAI WITH THE VIEW POINT OF CONCEPT OF FACE BY BROWN AND LEVINSON

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SWAMI RAMANAND TIRTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY,

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BY

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1. INTRODUCTION,

Human beings are gifted with the language as a tool of communication that we use every day to perform our daily activities while communicating one another. Other living organisms also communicate but their language has limited sounds and signs. However, the human language has more signs and sounds that are being used by us according to the contexts to share our thought, emotion and feelings. We cannot imagine a life without a language, it is one of the essential aspects of human being.

Every human being learns how to speak in childhood. To learn what to speak according to the context is very essential and it requires hard labor with practice. The person, who learns to speak as well as understands the language according to the context, has good command over the language. The person, who has good command over the language, has the greatest wealth.

2. THE SUBJECT MATTER:

Language can be defined as mode or medium of communication in general but in the present world with multilingual society every language has a unique medium of interaction. Moreover, every language has its own distinct culture, expressions of identity and emotional facets as the common codes expressions in a language are unique in comparison with other languages. However, the study of a language is the process to learn the culture, expressions of identity and emotional facets of the language.

The study of the use of language according to context is termed as Pragmatics. In other words, the Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of contextual utterances. Semantics is another branch of linguistics that also studies meaning but it studies meaning of the sentences. The Pragmatics studies the practical use of language according to context as the meaning can vary from context to context while the Semantics studies the surface or denotative meaning of the sentences. It can be said that the Pragmatic has wider scope than the Semantics as Semantics explores only the sentence meaning while the pragmatics studies the contextual meaning of the utterances.

Politeness:

The concept of Politeness is based upon the notion of politeness in linguistic interaction. The concept is related to the idea of polite social behavior. In Pragmatics, as it is focused, language is said to be used for accomplishing social actions. Applying the concept to the language in use, it refers to the polite use of language while performing linguistic behavior in society.

Pragmatic System of Politeness:

The following approaches to politeness have proposed by linguists:

A. Cooperative Principles:

H. P. Grice in his essay ***"Logic and conversation"*** published in 1975, has proposed 'Cooperative Principles' that includes four maxims:

1. Maxim of Quantity
2. Maxim of Quality
3. Maxim of Relation
4. Maxim of Manner

B. Politeness Principles:

The concept of 'Politeness Principles' is formulated by **G. N. Leech** in his book ***'Principles of Pragmatics'*** published in 1983. 'Politeness Principles' has provided six conversation maxims:

1. The Tact Maxim
2. The Generosity Maxim
3. The Approbation Maxim
4. The Modesty Maxim
5. The Agreement Maxim
6. The Sympathy Maxim

C. Face:

Penelope Brown and **Stephen Levinson** in their book ***'Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage'*** published in 1987 put forwarded the notion of 'Face', which is borrowed from Goffman (1967). In Pragmatics, the term 'Face' has been defined as 'the social identity' and also as 'the public self-image' of the individual. The term 'Face-Wants' thus refers to the wish of every individual to be respected by the others. Everyone wants his face to be accepted,

appreciated and respected by the others. In communication, speaker should care for the public-self image of the addressee. In their framework, 'Face' consists of two related aspects:

i. Positive Face:

Positive Face is the positive consistent self-image 'personality' claimed, appreciated and accepted by others. The term 'Positive Face' means the wish of the individual to be considered as one of the others. He is a person who will not generally adhere to his public image. Rather, he wants others to think him as one of them. That is, he will not try to separate himself from the rest of the others. Thus, the person's positive face is his wish to be accepted, even liked by the others. He wants the others to treat him as a member of the same group. For example,

"You are looking handsome today."

Here, in the above example Positive Face of the addressee is appreciated.

ii. Negative Face:

Negative Face is not exactly opposite of Positive Face but it is right to territories, freedom of action (choice), freedom from imposition. It refers to the wish of the individual to be respected by the others. Such a person thinks himself to be independent. For example,

"Will you please close the window?"

Here, in the above example Negative Face of the addressee is appreciated.

❖ Face Threatening Acts:

1. Positive Face Threatening Acts:

Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about their interactor's feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants. Positive face threatening acts can also cause damage to the speaker or the hearer. When an individual is forced to be separated from others so that their well being is treated less importantly, positive face is threatened:

A. Damage to the hearer:

The following are cases in which the positive face of the hearer is threatened:

- Expressions of disapproval (e.g. insults, accusations, complaints)
- Contradictions
- Disagreements or challenges.

- Excessively emotional expressions.
- Disrespect
- Belittling or boasting.
- Topics that relate to politics, race, religion.
- Interrupting, non sequiturs

B. Damage to the speaker:

The following are cases in which the positive face of the speaker is threatened:

- Expressions of violent emotions
- Irrelevance
- Apologies
- Acceptance of a compliment
- Inability to control one's physical self
- Inability to control one's emotional self
- Self-humiliation
- Confessions

2. Negative Face Threatening Acts:

Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. It can be a cause of damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and makes one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when negative face is threatened.

A. Damage to the hearer:

The following are cases in which the negative face of the Listener is threatened:

- Orders, requests, suggestions, advices, reminding, threats, or warnings
- Compliments, expressions of envy or admirations, or expressions of strong negative emotion toward the hearer (e.g. hatred, anger, distrust)
- Offers and promises

B. Damage to the speaker:

The following are cases in which the negative face of the speaker is threatened:

- An act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer.
- Expressing thanks

- Accepting a thank you or apology
- Excuses
- Acceptance of offers
- A response to the hearer's violation of social etiquette
- The speaker commits himself to something he or she does not want to do

❖ Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies):

There are four Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies) given by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in order to avoid Face Threatening Acts as Follows:

1. **Bald on Record**
2. **Positive Politeness**
3. **Negative Politeness**
4. **Off-Record- Indirect Strategy**

1. Bald on Record:

This strategy usually does not attempt to minimize the threat to the listener's Face, although there are ways that Bald on Record politeness strategy can be used to in trying to minimize Face Threatening Acts. Penelope brown and Levinson has outlined various cases where Bald on Record politeness strategy can be used:

a) Great Urgency or desperation:

e.g. "Switch on the light."

b) Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary

e.g. "Help!"

c) Task oriented

e.g. "Pass me the scale."

d) Little or no desire to maintain someone's face

e.g. "Don't forget to switch off the light when you leave your room."

e) Doing the FTA is in the interest of the hearer

e.g. "Your headlights are on!"

f) Welcomes

e.g. "Come in."

g) Offers

e.g. "Leave it. I'll clean it later."

2. Positive Politeness:

In this strategy, the speaker recognizes that the listener has a desire to be respected. This tries to minimize the threat to listener's Positive Face. Penelope brown and Levinson have given various situations where Positive Politeness strategy can be used:

a) **Attend to Listener's Interests, Needs, Wants**

   e.g. "You look sad. Can I do something for you?"

b) **Use solidarity in group identity markers**

   e.g. "Hi! Friends, can you lend me."

c) **Be optimistic**

d) **Include both Hearer and Speaker in Activity**

e) **Offer or promise**

f) **Exaggerate interest in Listener and in his interests**

   e.g. "That's a nice haircut you got. Where did you get it?"

g) **Avoid Disagreement**

h) **Joke**

   e.g. "Wow, that's whopper."

3. Negative Politeness:

Negative Politeness is exploited when speaker recognizes that the listener wants to be respected. Negative Politeness strategy is used to protect Negative Face of the listener, in order to avoid the imposition on the Listener. In the following situation Negative Politeness can be used:

a) **Be Indirect**

   e.g. "Would you know where Pune is?"

b) **Use hedges or questions**

   e.g. "Perhaps, he might have taken it."

c) **Be Pessimistic**

   e.g. "You couldn't find a way to lending me a thousand dollars, could you?"

d) **Minimize the imposition**

   e.g. "It's not too much out of your way, just a couple of blocks."

e) **Use obviating structures, like nominations, passives, or statements of general rules**

   e.g. "Spitting will not be tolerated."

f) **Apologize**

g) Use plural pronouns

e.g. "We regret to inform you."

5. Off-Record- Indirect Strategy:

This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing. This strategy is used in the following situations"

a) Give hints

e.g. "It's cold here."

b) Be vague

e.g. "Perhaps someone should have been more responsible."

c) Be sarcastic, Joking

e.g. "Yeah, he is real hero!"

3. Statements of Research:

a) The basic assumption on which the present study is based on pragmatic, chiefly the politeness theory of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson that is published in their book entitled '*Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*' (1987).

b) The metaphorical expression 'Face' by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson have bring out a different classification of the politeness strategies.

c) The Statements such as Orders, Requests, Complaints and Suggestions are the Face Threatening Speech Acts. Expressing Gratitude, Apologies, and Compliments are Face Saving Speech Acts (Politeness Strategies) according to Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson.

d) The concept of 'Face' by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson is an appropriate tool to measure the politeness phenomena in the selected novels of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai.

e) The present research study is an attempt to investigate the concept of 'Face' as authored by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson.

4. Aims and Objectives of the Present Work:

The Researcher aims to make a comparative analysis with application of the concept of 'Face' by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson to the selected novels of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai.

The objectives of the present research work are:

a) To study notion of 'Face' as proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in their book entitled '*Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*' published in 1987.
b) To examine how the selected novels of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai for the present research contains the elements of the characteristic discourse in a pragmatic manner.
c) To conduct an Investigatory analysis of the concept of Positive Face and Negative Face in the selected novels of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai.
d) To investigate and analyze how the social factors affect the use of the Face Threatening Acts as well as Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies) in the selected novels of Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai.
e) To offer a comprehensive theoretical background of pragmatics, referring to the various approaches concerned with the pragmatic system of politeness.

5. Hypotheses of the Present Research Study:

To realize the above mentioned aims and objectives the following hypotheses have been formulated and proposed to investigate:

a) Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai has used the pragmatic features of English in their selected novels for the present research study.
b) Face Threatening Acts and Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies) have heightened the pragmatic significance of Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*.
c) Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* give a fine demonstration of the concepts of Positive Face and Negative Face as presented by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson.
d) The pragmatic theories from J. L. Austin to Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson bring out the significance of the use and implications of their emerging branch of linguistics.
e) The research is an attempt to contribute in the domain of knowledge. The present study covers the key areas of pragmatics. The present research attempts to provide the possible explanations to deviations in the pragmatic style. The study is significant for the suggestions, recommendations and solutions for the pragmatic system of Politeness.

6. Research Methodology and the Procedure of the Study:

The following major qualitative research methods which have been employed in the study are:

a) **Library Method:** This method is used for the reading books and journals and the relevant reference material.

b) **Investigatory Method:** This method is used to investigate and to make enquiry about the present study in the use of the politeness principle of English.

c) **Analytical Method:** This method is used to analyze the collected data and to offer a critical analysis.

d) **Appreciation Method:** This method is used to appreciate various features of politeness strategic the learning and teaching of English language.

e) **Critical Scrutiny Method**: The data offered is thoroughly scrutinized with an eye that has transparently seen through the items of politeness from the pragmatic perspective.

7. Research Questions:

The study aims to find out the answers to the following research questions:

a) Is there any statistically significant difference in the use of politeness by Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai?

b) What are the factors responsible for the use of politeness and the concept of 'Face' in the selected novels for the present research?

c) What are the various aspects of Face Threatening Speech Acts and Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies)?

d) Dose the application of concept of 'Face' by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson help in deep thematic analysis of Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*?

8. Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data Collection:

The collection of data will be made in two stages of primary sources and secondary sources.

A. Primary Sources:

1) *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry
2) *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh

3) *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai

B. Secondary Sources:

I) Print Media:

Print media will be data through Books, Articles, and Papers in Research Journals and Reference Materials.

1) **Books**: Books on Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh and Kiran Desai, the theoretical works on linguistics, stylistics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics will be used to collect data for the secondary sources.
2) **Research journals**: Articles, papers, and relevant material will be Compiled.
3) **Reference Works:** Encyclopedia, Dictionaries, Thesaurus, Yearbooks, Handbooks, Primary reports, Proceedings of the Conferences, Seminars and other material will be used to collect secondary date.

II) Non Print Media:

1) Radio Programs
2) Audio-Video Cassettes
3) Films, Film Scripts, Slides
4) TV Programs

III) E-Media:

Internet, facebook, twitter, social networking, websites, mobile telephoning, etc.

9. Limitations of the Study:

For every researcher, the research has certain scopes and limitations.

1) The study is limited to the domain of English.
2) There is only one feature of pragmatics selected for analysis.
3) The study is limited to the notion 'Face' by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson
4) The present study is limited to Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*.
5) The illustrative material has the limitation of types of Face Threatening Acts and Face Saving Acts (Politeness Strategies) only.

10. Chapterization of the Study:

The present study is divided into six chapters:

1. **Chapter One: Introduction**
2. **Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework**
3. **Chapter Three: The Concept of 'Face' in *A Fine Balance***
4. **Chapter Four: The Concept of 'Face' in *The Shadow Line***
5. **Chapter Five: The Concept of 'Face' in *The Inheritance of Loss***
6. **Chapter Six: Conclusions**

Proposed chapter scheme of the present research study:

1) In **the First chapter**, introduction will offer an introduction to the present research and the methodological introduction to aims, objectives, hypothesis, limitations, research methodology, research questions, Chapterization and chapter scheme.

2) **The Second chapter** presents the theoretical framework of the present research study. It presents various approaches to the pragmatic system politeness and the theories of J. L. Austin, H.P. Grice, J. R. Searle, I. A. Richards, Ogden Geoffrey Leech, William Morris and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's theories will be discussed in brief. The notion of 'Face' will be discussed in detail.

3) The Third presents the analysis of notion of 'Face' and related aspects in *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry.

4) **Fourth chapter** demonstrates the evaluation of notion of 'Face' and related aspects in *The Shadow Line* by Amitav Ghosh.

5) **The Fifth chapter** discusses the analysis of notion of 'Face' and related aspects in *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai.

6) **The Fifth chapter** offers a summary of conclusions. The chapter-wise synoptic summary will be presented. It will be followed by the attachment objectives and the validation of hypothesis. The finding and the conclusions of the present study will be presented. Recommendations will be offered. Implications of the study will be presented and finally the scope for further research will be indicated.

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